



NEWS

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NNSA Program to Engage Iraqi Scientists **Will Support Reconstruction Efforts and Prevent Expansion of WMD Knowledge**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) is initiating a new program to provide employment opportunities to Iraqi scientists, technicians, and engineers. This program will complement other Bush Administration initiatives that seek to support reconstruction efforts and prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) expertise to terrorists or proliferant states.

The new effort is in cooperation with the Arab Science and Technology Foundation (ASTF) and the Cooperative Monitoring Center at Sandia National Laboratories. The unique partnership will also help rebuild key elements of Iraq's critical infrastructure and develop new Iraqi business opportunities that provide sustainability to Iraqi science and technology.

“This program addresses the critical need to provide significant and meaningful employment opportunities for all scientists in Iraq,” NNSA Administrator Linton F. Brooks said. “Moreover, it is helping them rebuild Iraqi science and technology infrastructure and reintegrate Iraq into the international science community.”

The program is being implemented by an international partnership of scientists from the ASTF, a pan-Arab non-governmental organization based in the United Arab Emirates that promotes the development of science and technology in the Arab world. Scientists from international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as NNSA's national laboratories will also participate. The program complements the State Department's recently-established Iraqi International Center for Science and Industry and the work by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). Since July 2003, the CPA has employed and redirected Iraqi scientists through the establishment, funding and direction of Iraqi Ministries of Science and Technology, Higher Education, Agriculture, Water Resources, and Environment.

The first phase of this long-term effort is the current survey of Iraq's science and technology infrastructure by scientists from the ASTF. Once the survey is completed, the partners will convene a workshop in the region to bring together representative experts from Iraq, the United States, the international science community, and funding organizations to discuss priorities and options for technical cooperation. Finally, financial contributions from donor countries and funding organizations will be sought to initiate work on several of the highest-priority projects, as well as institute a merit-based nomination and review process for future work.

NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency of the Department of Energy. It enhances U.S. national security through the military application of nuclear energy, maintains the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile, promotes international nuclear nonproliferation and safety, reduces global danger from weapons of mass destruction, provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion, and oversees its national laboratories to maintain U.S. leadership in science and technology.

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